

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 CAIRO 00614 071210Z

43

ACTION SS-30

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FM USINT CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5256

S E C R E T CAIRO 614

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS

TAGSC ETRN US EG

SUBJECT: VIP AIRCRAFT CONFIGURATION FOR PRESIDENT SADAT

REF: BEIRUT 1353, STATE 23514

1. THUM AND HIS LOCKHEED COLLEAGUES VISITED CAIRO
FEB 5-6 FOLLOWING UP ON KAMAL ADHAM'S REQUEST THAT
LOCKHEED OFFER ASSISTANCE IN CONNECTION WITH EGYPTIAN INTEREST
IN CONFIGURING AN AIRCRAFT FOR PRESIDENT SADAT'S USE.

2. IN INITIAL CALL ON ME, THEY INDICATED ADHAM HAD TOLD
THEM TO GET IN TOUCH WITH ASRAF MARWAN, WHICH HEY WERE
PLANNING TO DO. THEY ASKED IF I HAD ANY INFORMATION
ABOUT EGYPTIAN PLANS FOR CIP ORIENTED AIRCRAFT. I SAID
MARWAN HAD EARLIER TOLD ME OF SUCH AN INTEREST AND HAD
INDICATED EGYPTIANS WERE PLANNING TO USE ONE OF THEIR
BOEING 707'S NOW UNDERGOING OVERHAUL IN SEATTLE FOR
THIS PURPOSE. I ADDED THAT I DID NOT KNOW WHETHER
EGYPTIANS HAVE ALREADY RAISED MATTER WITH BOEING. I
ALSO PASSED ON SUBSTANCE OF STATE REFTEL.

3. THUM AND HIS COLLEAGUES AGAIN CAME BY TO SEE ME
YESTERDAY AFTERNOON TO RELATE THE FOLLOWING: THERE IS
CLEARLY DISAGREEMENT WITHIN GOE AS TO WHAT IS WANTED.
THEY HAD FIRST MET WITH MARWAN WHO HAD TOLD THEM TO PRE-
PARE PLANS FOR SUCH A VIP AIRCRAFT USING THE BOEING 707
NOW IN SEATTLE. SUCH PLANS WERE NEEDED IMMEDIATELY SO THAT

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 CAIRO 00614 071210Z

SADAT CAN PERSONALLY INITIAL THEM BEFORE

MARWAN LEAVES FOR US ON FEB 25. GOE, A*CORDING
MARWAN, WOULD ARRANGE PAYMENT. HE HAD ALSO STRESSED NEED
FOR INSTALLATION OF SECURE COMMUNICATIONS IN AIRCRAFT OF
THE TYPE IN AIR FORCE ONE. MARWAN HAD THEN ARRANGED
THAT THE GROUP MEET WITH MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION
NOUH, AVIATION ADVISOR SHAMS AND OTHERS FROM THE MINISTRY
OF AVIATION FOR MORE DETAILED DISCUSSIONS.

4. DURING THE LOCKHEED GROUP'S TALKS WITH AVIATION
MINISTRY OFFICIALS, THEY WERE TOLD VERY FRANKLY HTAT
MARWAN'S IDEAS ARE TOO AMBITIOUS. AVIATION MINISTRY WANTS
SOMETHING MUCH MORE MODEST THAT MARWAN ENVISAGES. EGYPT
HAS NO MONEY TO PAY FOR EXPENSIVE VIP FITTINGS. ACCORDING
AVIATION MINISTRY ESTIMATE, PRESIDENTIAL TRAVEL IS NO MORE
THAN ABOUT 300 FLYING HOURS PER YEAR, HENCE NO
AIRCRAFT DEDICATED FOR THE PRESIDENT'S USE IS
NECESSARY. ALL EGYPTIAN COMMERCIAL AIRCRAFT ARE BADLY
NEEDED FOR REVENUE-GENERATING PURPOSES. THEY SUGGESTED
LOCKHEED SHOULD TALK MARWAN OUT OF HIS GRANDIOSE PLANS.
AVIATION MINISTRY HAS REPORTEDLY ASKED BOEING TO PREPARE
A MODEST "KET" WHICH CAN QUICKLY BE INSTALLED IN ANY
BOEING AS NEEDED. COMMUNICATIONS SHOULD BE LIMITED TO
STANDARD AIRCRAFT VARIETY WITHOUT ANY SOPHISTICATED
SECURITY GEAR. ALTHOUGH BOEIN HAS ALREADY BEEN ASKED
TO TENDER ON SUCH A "KIT" AND A BOEING REPRESENTATIVE IS
EXPECTED HERE NEXT WEEK TO DISCUSS MATTER WITH AVIATION
MINISTRY OFFICIALS, LOCKHEED WAS ALSO INVITED TO SUBMIT
A COMPETITIVE BID.

5. THUM UND HIS COLLEAGUES ARE PUZZLED AND CONFUSED.
AVIATION MINISTRY'S STRONG INSISTENCE ON A MODEST "KIT"
TYPE INSTALLATION IS A FAR CRY FROM WHAT ADHAM
AND MARWAN HAD LED THEM TO BELIEVE. WHILE LOCKHEED CAN
SUBMIT TENDER FOR SUCH A "KIT," THUM WAS UNCERTAIN WHETHER
THE COMPANY WILL WANT TO MAKE ANY SPECIAL EFFORT IN CON-
NECTION WITH SO SMALL A JOB. A BALANCING FACTOR WHICH
LOCKHEED MUST WEIGHT IS THAT DOING SO COULD CONCEIVABLY
PAVE THE WAY FOR FUTUREBUSINESS WITH EGYPT WHICH LOCKHEED IS
ANXIOUS TO DEVELOP IF AT ALL FEASIBLE.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 CAIRO 00614 071210Z

6. COMMENT: THAT MARWAN AND THE AVIATION MINISTRY
SHOULD BE AT ODDS IS NOT SURPROSING. AVIATION MINISTRY
IS KEENLY AWARE OF SHORTAGE OF FUNDS. MARWAN SEEMS
OBLIVIOUS TO THIS PROBLEM AND APPARENTLY EXPECTS
FINANCING TO COME FROM SAUDI ARABIA OR ELSEWHERE. WHEN
I ASKED HIM ABOUT UDHAM'S INVOLVEMENT IN ARRANGING
LOCKHEED GROUP VISIT, HE SAID ADHAM HAD POINTED OUT TO
HIM BOEING COMPANY SIMPLY MAKES AIRCRAFT. LOCKHEEDN ON

THE OTHER HAND, NOT ONLY MAKES AIRCRAFT BUT ALSO
SPECIALIZES ON FITTING ANY AIRCRAFT FOR VIP INTERIORS.
IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, LOCKHEED SEEMED TO HIM THE RIGHT
COMPANY TO PURSUE THE MATTER WITH APPROPRIATE AVIATION
MINISTRY OFFICIALS. MARWAN AND ADHAM HOLD CORRESPONDING
JOBS IN EGYTIAN AND SAUDI GOVERNMENTS AND HAVE COMMON
INTERESTS.
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